

**MINUTES OF THE
REGULAR MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION
CITY OF EDINA, MINNESOTA
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
APRIL 23, 2014
7:00 PM**

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. ROLL CALL

Answering the roll call were: Schroeder, Olsen, Kilberg, Halva, Lee, Carr, Forrest, Potts

Members absent from roll: Staunton, Scherer, Platteter

III. APPROVAL OF MEETING AGENDA

Commissioner Carr moved approval of the April 23, 2014 meeting agenda. Commissioner Forrest seconded the motion. All voted aye; motion carried.

IV. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

A. Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Edina Planning Commission March 12, 2014

Commissioner Carr moved approval of the April 9, 2014, meeting minutes. Commissioner Olson seconded the motion. Acting Chair Potts requested a change to the minutes regarding his participation in the vote on the Xerxes/York project. All voted aye; motion carried.

V. COMMUNITY COMMENT

Acting Chair Potts asked if anyone would like to speak; being none, Commissioner Carr moved to close community comment. Commissioner Olson seconded the motion. All voted aye; public comment closed.

VI. REPORTS/RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Sketch Plan Review – 66th West Apartment for Beacon Interfaith Housing, 3360 West 66th Street

Planner Presentation

Planner Teague reported that the Planning Commission is being asked to consider a sketch plan request to remodel and expand the existing TCF Bank building, located at 3330 66th Street. The applicant proposes to remodel and expand the building into 39 units of small studio apartments for young adults who have experienced homelessness. The size of the units would range from 355-456 square feet. Each unit would contain a full kitchen and bathroom. The building would contain offices for on-site service providers and property management. There would also be a community area for residents; a fitness area; a computer lab and a laundry room.

Teague explained that the site is 39,204 square feet in size. The existing bank is 18,179 square feet. The proposed addition would be 11,888 square feet. The building would remain two stories. The remodel of the building would retain the existing brick, and the addition would be brick with metal panels.

Teague noted there would be 25 surface parking stalls. No enclosed parking is proposed. The applicants have indicated in their narrative that 16% of their residents would have cars. In similar Beacon projects in other cities, 7% of their residents have cars. Therefore, they believe they would have adequate parking. They would anticipate about 8 parking stalls needed for residents and 6 for staff. Residents are expected to utilize the Metro Transit bus service available across the street at Southdale Center. Teague stated a parking and traffic study would be completed with a formal development application.

Continuing, Teague said all of the 39 units would be considered affordable housing, and would apply towards the City and Met Council's goal for affordable housing. The Comprehensive Plan defines the site and area as RM, Regional Medical. The RM allows for senior housing on a case by case basis, however, does not allow other housing. Therefore, a Comprehensive Plan Amendment would be required.

Teague said to accommodate the request, the following would be required:

1. A Rezoning from POD-I, Planned Office District-I, to PUD, Planned Unit Development.
2. A Comprehensive Guide Plan Amendment to allow housing other than Senior Housing in the Regional Medical District.

Teague pointed out this property is located within an area of the City that is designated as a "Potential Area of Change" within the 2008 Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan states that within the Potential Areas of Change, "A development proposal that involves a Comprehensive Plan Amendment or a rezoning will require a Small Area Plan study prior to planning application. However, the authority to initiate a Small Area Plan rests with the City Council." The City Council is therefore requested to determine if a Small Area Plan is necessary.

The Comprehensive Plan was amended to allow senior housing in the RM District adjacent to the Fairview Southdale Hospital, as part of the 6500 France project. If the project is found to be acceptable, this definition could be expanded for “specialty housing” as deemed appropriate by the City Council, when specific goals of the Comprehensive Plan are achieved.

Consideration for housing in the RM District and at higher densities includes: proximity to hospitals, proximity to low density uses, utilities capacity, level of transit service available, and impact on adjacent roads. Other desired items to allow greater density for senior housing would include: Below grade parking, provision of park or open space, affordable housing, sustainable design principles, and provision of public art.

Concluding, Teague stated a case could be made for allowing specialty housing in this location as it would reuse an existing building (sustainability); provide a 100% affordable housing development; be in close proximity to Metro Transit; be located on a high visibility arterial roadway; and be completely separated from low density residential. Traffic impacts, further consideration of sustainable design and public art would be considered with a formal application.

Appearing for the Applicant

Lee Blons, Beacon Interfaith

Discussion

Commissioner Carr asked Planner Teague where the concept of “specialty housing” derived from. Planner Teague responded it’s a term he suggested to allow flexibility and “use” limits. Continuing, Carr also observed parking is at odds with the ordinance; however, she believes it can be resolved.

Commissioner Forrest questioned if the zoning classification and comprehensive guide plan are at odds in this location. Planner Teague responded yes and no. He explained that the zoning classification for this property is POD-I; Planned Office District and it is guided in the Comprehensive Plan as Regional Medical. Office use and senior housing is permitted in Regional Medical; however, housing is not permitted in the POD-I, Planned Office District.

Acting Chair Potts commented that for the applicant to achieve this proposal the land use needs modification. Teague responded in the affirmative.

Commissioner Olsen asked Planner Teague if the Comprehensive Plan references affordable housing. Planner Teague responded in the affirmative. He explained the Met Council has established for Edina an “affordable housing” goal of adding 212 affordable housing units by 2020.

Applicant Presentation

Ms. Blons addressed the Commission and gave a brief description of their mission statement and their effort in securing affordable housing for homeless teens. Blons explained that they believe the 66th Street location is excellent and they are using the concept model from their Nicollet Square development for this project.

Blons reported that the site is .9 acres and will incorporate the entire existing 18,179 square foot building to include an 11,888 square foot addition to accommodate the 39 proposed housing units. Blons told the Commission non-profits tend to work backwards they secure the approvals first and then the funding. Continuing, Blons said their emphasis is on providing safe living accommodations so teens can focus on their education and employment. Blons pointed out the 66 West location is excellent; it's located near multiple employment opportunities and is directly across from mass transit. Concluding, Blons introduced Bart Nelson, Urban Works to speak on the architectural components of the project.

Bart Nelson gave a power point presentation highlighting aspects of the project to include parking and proposed landscaping and screening features.

Continued Discussion

Commissioner Carr told the Commission she thinks the building renovations and new addition are well done. She further asked Mr. Nelson if bike racks are proposed for the site. Mr. Nelson responded in the affirmative. Continuing, Carr asked if materials for the proposed fence have been chosen. Mr. Nelson said the materials for the fence haven't been finalized; however, he believes they may go with a cedar fence.

Commissioner Forrest stated she has a concern with regard to the proposed fence on the buildings south side. Forrest explained that a redevelopment goal of the Planning Commission (where appropriate) is to provide a pedestrian experience by engaging the building and street. She observed if a tall fence is placed in this area the site would be "cut off" from the streetscape.

Acting Chair Potts said in his opinion this redevelopment proposal is intriguing not only for its proposed land use but for reuse of the building instead of teardown rebuild. Potts added if the project proceeds as proposed he would suggest that the applicant consider other sustainable strategies with regard to the building. Concluding, Potts further suggested that the applicant work with City staff on finding the "right" parking number and if appropriate develop a proof of parking agreement to ensure adequate greenspace.

Commissioner Schroeder commented that he agrees a proof of parking agreement would work well for this site, adding he believes if a proof of parking agreement were drafted and the need arose for more parking the site could yield more parking spaces. Schroeder further stated in his opinion the two access points on Barrie Road are not needed; one is

adequate. Continuing, Schroeder agreed with the comments from Commissioner Forrest on engaging the street. He said the Commission has been working hard on the relationship between building to street and in this situation he believes more work could be done to accomplish that interaction. He further suggested that simple changes be made to the façade along West 66th Street to make it more inviting. Schroeder said he appreciates the desire for a fence, but suggested redesign of the front outdoor area to ensure street engagement while affording a buffer area. This would achieve the Commission's work on living streets.

Concluding Schroeder said he likes this proposal but stated he's not sure if this request brings the site to its highest potential. He noted no one knows how far the RMD zoning district may expand and if this site is eliminated from that potential some things are lost and some gained; whichever way the redevelopment precedes that point should be kept in mind.

Commissioner Lee asked Mr. Nelson if there are windows proposed for the basement level. Mr. Nelson responded in the affirmative. He pointed out each studio apartment would have a window and there would be a window in the common area for a total of four. Continuing, Commissioner Lee said she agrees with past comments that the south elevation needs more attention; either through landscaping or architectural features. Concluding, Lee asked how many outdoor gathering areas are proposed. Nelson responded "outdoor gathering" areas are proposed on the north and south side of the building. Nelson indicated the development team would re-review landscaping and screening to soften the site and engage the streetscape on the south elevation.

Commissioner Kilberg asked if Beacon contacted neighboring property owners. Ms. Larson responded Beacon has outreached to neighboring business owners and those conversations will continue as the project proceeds. She also noted Fairview Southdale Hospital is supportive.

Acting Chair Potts asked Ms. Blons to explain the "moving in and moving out" process the teens go through. Ms. Larson explained that the goal of Beacon is to "catch" the teens as early as possible. When a teen moves in a rent is established and each year the rent goes up until the teen(s) is ready to move out. Throughout their stay the teens are provided with services that counsel them on work skills, school and independence after they leave Beacon.

Acting Chair Potts thanked the applicants for their presentation and stated in summary the City needs to be mindful of the master planning of the area in their decision making process; however, the project as presented is intriguing, adding density without an increase in traffic and providing affordable safe housing for teens. Both are goals of Edina's Comprehensive Plan.

B. Sketch Plan Review – 7151 York Avenue (Senior Housing)

Planner Presentation

Planner Teague explained that the Planning Commission is being asked to consider a sketch plan request to build a 100 unit assisted living building, west of the existing Yorktown Continental Senior Living apartments at 7151 York Avenue. The housing would include 70 units of senior housing with services and 30 memory care units. Ten percent (10%) of the units would be for residents below 50% median income level.

Teague reported that the building would be four stories tall and would not be connected to the existing twelve (12) story 263 unit apartment building. The existing site is 5.85 acres in size; therefore, the density is 45 units per acre. With the proposed addition of 100 units; the density would increase to 64 units per acre. The property is zoned Planned Senior Residential District – 4, PSR-4 and guided High Density Residential. Teague noted the Planning Commission and City Council previously considered a sketch plan review for a 76 unit senior housing project back in 2013.

The Comprehensive Plan describes High Density Residential as between 12-30 units per acre. However, density for senior housing may be increased, based on proximity to hospitals, proximity to low density uses, utilities capacity, level of transit service available, and impact on adjacent roads. Other desired items to allow greater density for senior housing would include: Below grade parking, provision of park or open space, affordable housing, sustainable design principles, and provision of public art.

Teague concluded that a case could be made for higher density in this instance: the building would be separated and screened from the single family homes to the east by the existing 12-story building; there are adequate utilities to serve the site; transit service is available on York Avenue; below grade parking is proposed; and 10% of the units would be affordable. Traffic impacts, sustainable design and public art would be considered with a formal application. This is an area of the City that could potentially sustain higher densities.

Appearing for the Applicant

Della Kolpin, Mesaba Capital

Discussion

Commissioner Olsen asked Planner Teague if the parking indicated on the plans is existing. Planner Teague responded in the affirmative, adding the proposed addition will also contain an underground parking element.

Commissioner Lee asked if the applicant for this project was different from the previous applicant. Planner Teague responded in the affirmative. Commissioner Lee further asked Planner Teague what's the maximum unit count for the subject site. Planner Teague responded 182 units; however at the present time they are over their allowable units and would need a variance to add this addition.

Commissioner Kilberg asked Planner Teague if the City of Richfield has any requirements that would impact this development. Planner Teague responded that the site is entirely in Edina, adding there are no code issues with Richfield that he was aware of. Planner Teague with graphics pointed out the abutting land uses to include the City of Richfield park property, high density residential, office and commercial.

Applicant Presentation

Ms. Kolpin addressed the Commission and explained that their intent is to construct a building that creates a senior living campus extension on the "front lot" of the Yorktown Continental Apartments. Kolpin explained that Yorktown Continental is a 12-story, 263-unit senior apartment building within walking distance to multiple amenities. Kolpin said the sketch plan they are proposing is for a 4-story 100-unit continuum of aging building with underground parking. Kolpin said their plan calls for at least 10% of the total units be designated for residents below the 50% median income level.

Continuing, Kolpin explained that the total square footage of the project is proposed at 120,000 +/-NSF. The parking for the parcel is planned at 50 enclosed below and 223 parking stalls on grade. The proposed 100-units will consist of 70-units of senior housing with full kitchen and laundry. These units will also be provided with support services for residents with more complex care needs with staff on-site 24-hours-a-day. The other 30 units are memory care that will be secure and specially designed for those with mild to moderate memory loss from Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia.

Kolpin said another of their goals is to engage York Avenue; noting they are petitioning the MTC for a bus stop location. Kolpin acknowledged that their renderings are very preliminary however; their intent is to "marry" the buildings to ensure compatibility. They also want to use a lot of windows and provide roof top terraces. Building materials will include cultured stone, modular brick veneer, prefinished metal sills and flashing, LP smart siding and more. Concluding, Kolpin said the proposed building will feature congregate dining, coffee shop/Bistro, lounge areas, library, computer room, craft, fitness and spa facilities.

Discussion

Commissioner Carr questioned if there are sidewalks in this area. Ms. Kolpin responded there is a sidewalk in front of the building along York Avenue; however site sidewalks are needed to connect to the main sidewalk to allow safe access to the area's amenities.

Commissioner Lee commented that it appears to her from the renderings that the proposed façade is undulating. Ms. Kolpin agreed, adding there is still more work to do on the front facade but the plan thus far is not to have a completely flat plain façade.

Commissioner Kilberg commented that another amenity to keep in mind when planning connectivity is the promenade. He encouraged sidewalks or some form of walking path be extended to take advantage of the promenade. Ms. Kolpin responded that she agrees the promenade is a significant amenity, adding discussions are taking place regarding its proximity to the subject site. Commissioner Kilberg asked the applicants if they had any interaction with the residents of Yorktown Continental. Ms. Kolpin responded in the affirmative; adding all discussions have been positive.

Commissioner Schroeder stated he echoes Commissioner Kilbergs comments and further stressed the importance of connectivity and the opportunities that exist during a redevelopment process. Schroeder also said in his opinion everything should be done to create a site that can be experienced by everyone. Schroeder said he is unsure of the correct number for the front setback; however want assurance that the site offers shared experiences for the residents. Schroeder said with setback he was willing to be flexible. Continuing, Schroeder suggested envisioning what the space between the proposed new building and street would be, adding it's possible a "front yard" courtyard could be a good starting point. Establishing some type of area that would ensure that the site remains vibrant and active would be very positive. Concluding, Schroder also indicated he wouldn't be opposed to a front yard setback variance if it ensures that the site is an active attractive connected space that complements the street scape.

Commissioner Halva asked if an enclosed access between buildings is proposed. Ms. Kolpin responded no enclosed access is proposed; however the connection between buildings is through the interior courtyard.

Commissioner Carr stressed the importance of connectivity and walkability and suggested that the traffic signal at Hazelton be studied to ensure that the timing is correct allowing safe crossing for the residents. Ms. Kolpin said they will review the timing on the traffic signal. Commissioner Schroeder also pointed out there are two options available to cross York Ave; the traffic signal at Hazelton Road and the underpass to the south. Planner Teague agreed and with graphics pointed out the crossings; a crosswalk on Hazelton and farther south the underpass.

Acting Chair Potts thanked the applicant for their presentation, adding it's a very interesting proposal that covers a number of points outlined in the Comprehensive Plan; affordable housing, traffic reduction, walkability etc. Potts further asked the applicant when they return to have more specific sustainable strategies in place for the new building.

C. Zoning Ordinance Amendment – Properties eligible for PUD, Planned Unit Development.

Planner Presentation

Planner Teague informed the Commission staff will be drafting an Ordinance that addresses the issue of rezoning R-I properties to PUD. Teague noted that currently R-I properties are exempt from that process. Continuing, with graphics Teague pointed out instances in Edina where residential properties abut multi-residential buildings. Teague said this issue was brought to the forefront because of a commercial redevelopment project abutted and included residential properties in the project. Teague explained in order for the Commission and City Council to consider rezoning these R-I properties to PUD an Ordinance amendment is required. Teague said that the draft ordinance is limited to R-I property as long as the R-I property constitutes less than fifty percent of the total property in the proposed PUD. Teague said this caveat would ensure limits.

Acting Chair Potts said in his opinion the 50% threshold is a good idea with the intent of protecting residential properties. Planner Teague responded the intent was to limit and control.

Commissioner Kilberg pointed out if this Ordinance would have been in place during the redevelopment process on West 49th Street the two single family homes to its east could have been incorporated into the project. Teague agreed.

Commissioner Carr said another way to look at this would be to draft an ordinance that is project specific or a two-step process; rezone to PCD and then to PUD.

Commissioner Forrest said in this instance the request doesn't seem inappropriate; however she does have a concern with "commercial creep", adding there needs to be a way to ensure R-I sites are carefully protected.

Commissioner Schroeder said if an applicant requests a rezoning to PUD the site should be without risk and the rezoning to PUD benefits the City. He pointed out the conditions established for PUD rezoning approvals are very tight and controlled. Continuing, Schroeder said if a rezoning of a site to PUD is proven to be advantageous the rezoning is specifically tied to that development; no other changes/uses would be permitted without further Commission and Council review and approval. Schroeder said he isn't afraid of a PUD and reiterated if the proposed rezoning is reasonable and benefits the City he can support it. Concluding, Schroeder noted the City doesn't have to grant any property a PUD rezoning just because it's requested.

Commissioners agreed with the comments thus far. Acting Chair Potts closed the topic.

D. Tree Ordinance

Commissioner Carr reported that the Tree Preservation Ordinance the Commission approved at their last meeting will be presented to the Council by her and Commissioner Platteter on May 6th. Carr explained she wanted Commissioners to note the comments received from a member of the Energy and Environment Commission (EEC). She further stated the recommended ordinance and comments from the EEC member would be forwarded to the City Council prior to their May 6th meeting.

VII. CORRESPONDENCE AND PETITIONS

Acting Chair Potts acknowledged receipt of the council update and attendance.

VIII. CHAIR AND COMMISSION COMMENTS

Commissioner Forrest reported that she is a member of the Valley View Road Small Area Plan working group along with new member to the group Commissioner Lee. Forrest explained their goal is to keep to a specific timeline and to ensure residents have ample participation in the process.

Commissioner Lee explained that the working group anticipates an eight to nine month timeline; ultimately the goal would be to establish a prototype for future use. Lee noted the working group is going to be deliberate about each step of the process.

Commissioner Carr suggested that the Commission needs to keep in mind their work plan and have future discussions on "where we are" in the plan.

IX. STAFF COMMENTS

Planner Teague apprised the Commission that the City Council recently approved the three-lot subdivision “Wyman Place” on Warren Avenue. Teague said the applicant will adhere to Commission and Council conditions and construction will commence sometime this summer.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Olsen moved meeting adjournment at 8:30 PM. Commissioner Lee seconded the motion. All voted aye; motion carried.

Respectfully submitted